



THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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'OUR LITTLE BROWN BROTHERS.'

The cherry-blossom Japan of Lafcadio Hearn, and the burlesque Japan of Gilbert and Sullivan's musical comedy, has been transformed for the British public into a sinister and relentless reality. Our British statesmen have been only too well aware of the menacing character of Japanese potentialities and policies (they shewed that when they closed the Burma Road); but the British public, like the American public, has continued to live in a fool's paradise.

Japan is a small country; the Japanese are men of small stature: benevolent Americans call them 'our little brown brothers.' It is therefore not surprising that a public, educated or mis-educated by a Press which is ever ready to stress as assured precursors of victory the vastness of the populations, territories and resources of the Allies, should have been misled as to the nature of the Japanese menace.

The Japanese having conquered, since the opening of their lightning campaign, a territory of a million square miles with its hundred million inhabitants, and having secured at Singapore the surrender of the largest British army ever known in our national history to have laid down its arms, the public has come to realize not only the significance of Japan's entrance into the war, but also to ask itself why this small and insignificant people has been able to achieve such astounding success.

Of course the ineptitudes and self-confidence of British and American administrators and commanders in the Far East may account for a good deal of Japan's success. The inadequacy of the preparations for defence by both Americans and British is really amazing, but even more amazing is the failure of Australasia. In

the last forty years Australia has feared the Japanese peril. They alone perhaps, in the British Empire, desired that the Russians should conquer Japan in the Russo-Japanese war.

Living in the South Pacific at that period, the writer of these notes can recall hearing no other sentiment than that the Russians might smash the Japanese, except in the case of a New Zealander, who expressed the hope that it might be possible that 'both might smash each other.' Yet these menaced dominions, trusting we presume in the all-powerful defence of the British Navy, have done little to prepare their defence against Japan.

But what would be worse than all the disasters and defeats that we have sustained at the hands of Japan would be that she should be on our side, or we on hers, in this world-wide war. Her aims are not our aims nor her methods our methods.

This situation will perhaps seem disconcerting to those who regard Japan as the great example of a stagnant, not decadent, Oriental state recreated in three generations by the acquisition of the scientific knowledge and practical methods of Western civilization. To regard this brilliant feat of Japan as equivalent to her becoming a civilized Western state is an example of that popular error which identifies civilization with its externals and not with its inner spirit. Japan certainly has taken over in the most thorough fashion all the externals of Western civilization which she needed for practical purposes; but the underlying spirit of that civilization which is the spirit of the Christian Religion, and which has given that civilization its essential quality and true value for mankind, Japan has not valued nor acquired. She has possessed herself of the oyster shell, but after examining the pearl has thrown it away. It is easy to blame Japan for making this mistake, but how many other states with much fuller experience of the Christian Religion than Japan possessed have gone perilously near making the same mistake, if they have not actually made it? Japan has not had Christianity presented to her in its best and purest form, nor have the circumstances in which Christianity has been presented to her been such as to make her rejection of it of the character of that Great Refusal which deliberately rejects good and chooses evil. Christianity first came to Japan in the form of papal Catholicism. The missionaries who brought it were saints and heroes, but the Christianity which they brought was semi-paganised in its beliefs, magically superstitious in its practices and fanatically intolerant in its policy. Yet, enshrined in it was the wonderful spirit of Divine Love which had glowed in the life of its Founder. We see this Divine Love reflected in the words of the well-known hymn of St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), the 'Apostle of the Indies,' who first brought Christianity to Japan :

‘My God, I love thee; not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love thee not
Are lost eternally.

Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward:
But as thyself has loved me,
O ever loving Lord!’

Japanese Roman Catholicism made great progress, but within a century was extirpated by the Japanese because of its interference in the politics of the country. In the nineteenth century Christianity again offered itself to the Japanese, but in the form of Evangelical Protestantism. It received favourable attention, not as the Divine Gospel of Life and Light and Love, but as an integral part of that wonderful Western civilization which seemed to offer Japan gifts of material wealth and power such as she had never known hitherto. But Japan was not slow to discover that the spirit of evolutionary materialism and utilitarianism had in it something more akin to modern science than had the Christian faith and the Christian ethic. So it is not to be wondered at that as a nation she chose the former and rejected the latter. Again there were great excuses for this mistake. Many of the brightest intelligences in Western Europe and America at this time seemed to be making the same choice. Moreover, modern science and modern Biblical criticism seemed to be discrediting the claims of Christianity to be regarded as the supreme and final religion of mankind. This conclusion was due, not to those claims being discredited by anthropology and comparative religion, nor by the psychology and philosophy of religion, for the essentials of the Religion of Jesus and the Religion of the Spirit are sustained, not discredited, by such studies. It was the outworn, obscurantist, dogmatic and schismatic form in which the Christian Religion was being presented to Western-minded Japan which was largely responsible for Japan's rejection of it. The Christian Church was at least as responsible as Japan for this rejection. The remarkable welcome accorded by at least a million Japanese adherents to the primal Religion of Jesus as presented in the preaching, practice and personality of Toyohiko Kagawa in his ‘Kingdom of God movement,’ and the reluctant sanctioning of such a form of Christianity by the militarist, nationalist and anti-democratic autocracy who at present govern Japan, at least indicates that up to the present it is the perverted forms in which the Christian Religion has been presented to Japan that are mainly responsible for its rejection. Those who blame Japan for her national rejection of Christianity would do well to reflect whether Japan is really more profoundly anti-Christian than those vast

multitudes in nominally Christian lands to-day who have rejected Christianity.

Edmund Burke condemned the folly of those who would bring an indictment against a whole nation, and although we to-day have been rightly horrified by reliable accounts of Japanese atrocities, we ought to be prepared to regard it as possible that these are the crimes of a ferocious *Samurai* and their adherents rather than the deliberate policy of a whole nation. The idea that the *Samurai* are devoted to the ideals of *Bushido*,* or knightly chivalry in their treatment of the vanquished, has turned out to be the romantic creation of Japanese literary window-dressers and to constitute no essential standard of behaviour for Japanese fighting men. Undoubtedly courage, loyalty, self-sacrifice, patient endurance of hardship, thrift, industry, patriotism, constitute the national virtues of this island race—the Romans of the oriental world. But those virtues which the Christian Religion sought to infuse into the ancient Roman Empire, and in some measure successfully, are not the characteristic virtues of Japan. The religion of Japan, notwithstanding the influences of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, is Shinto—the Way of the Gods—a combination of animistic Nature-worship, the cultus of ancestral spirits, and religious reverence for the Mikado, the incarnation of the spirit of nationalist imperialism.

Hence it is not surprising that in her nationalist policy Japan is anti-Christian, even though she tolerates the existence of Christian communities in her country, provided they take no part in politics. It is true that Japan has just managed to secure an accredited representative at the Vatican. Some may argue that by receiving a Japanese diplomatic representative, and by appointing a Vicar-Apostolic to the Court of Japan, the Vatican regards Japan as Christian; but what has taken place is merely a diplomatic move in a game of power politics. In the Revolution of 1830, Tallyrand stood at a window with a friend watching critically the fighting at the barricades. After a while he turned away with the remark, 'Well, our side is winning.' His friend asked, 'Whom do you mean by our side?' The prince of diplomats replied with a smile, 'I am not quite sure yet.' This is the policy of the Vatican.

Besides being nationally anti-Christian, Japan is definitely anti-democratic. When, in order to secure the leadership of the Orient, she promises freedom to other Asiatic nationalities which she desires to enrol in her cause, her ultimate purpose is, not to grant them freedom, but to achieve their subjugation and exploitation, for she knows herself to belong to the class of the *Herrenvolk*.

* cf. *Bushido*, by Professor Inazo Nitobé, A.M., Ph.D. (G. P. Putnam; 1905).

It is for these reasons, however dark and difficult the present situation may seem to be, we are glad that in this war the Japanese are not on our side. Some may feel that a citizen of Christian England ought equally to be opposed to our alliance with Soviet Russia, but they are mistaken. Russia we believe to be essentially Christian, more really Christian than she knows. In her national policy Japan is pagan. Nevertheless, although the victory of Christian principles is essential and no price is too great to pay in order to secure their supremacy, yet Christian principles are not enough. Japanese poverty and Japanese over-population have been important causes of Japanese wars of aggression. These have got to be effectively remedied if we are to secure and maintain world peace. We are often told by our democratic leaders in this country that it is as hypocritical as it is useless to preach the Gospel to 'empty bellies.' This is no less true in the Orient.

RELIGION IN THE MAKING.

Dr. A. C. Bouquet of Cambridge has produced a remarkable Pelican—almost an Albatross. Its title and theme is *Comparative Religion*.* Comparative religion is the technical term for the scientific study of religion. The term, like the branch of scientific research which it describes, is of modern origin. It is true that in the ancient world, as in the mediaeval world, descriptive surveys of religion, some of them even critical and analytical, were produced, but none of them sufficiently systematic to deserve the title scientific. As a curiosity of literature it is worth recording that, in Dr. Bouquet's view, Lord Herbert of Cherbury—the elder brother of George Herbert, *The Country Parson*—'may claim to have initiated in this country the comparative study of religion.' Herbert of Cherbury's conclusions are worth noting, for they seem to us to be typical of the tolerance, insight, and good sense of the English mind at its best:

'That religion is the chief distinguishing mark of man as a species, and that there are no real atheists, but only so-called atheists, who object to the false and inappropriate attributes which are assigned to Deity, and will rather have no God than one who is unworthy of belief.'

Dr. Bouquet also notes that Herbert of Cherbury deserves remembrance for his attempts at a scientific definition of religion, which he summed up in five propositions:

1. There is a Supreme *Numen*, possessing eleven attributes, *i.e.* It is blessed, self-existent, first cause, the energy and purpose of all things, eternal, good, just, wise, infinite, omnipotent, and free.
2. It is a man's duty to worship this Supreme Being.
3. Virtue and piety form the vital part of such worship.
4. Sin against *Numen* must be repented of, and reparation made for it.

* *Comparative Religion*, by A. C. Bouquet. (Published by Penguin Books. 6d. 1942.)

5. The world is morally governed; that is to say, in the future life man receives the due reward of his deeds. (p. 18.)

These conclusions will seem much too neat and clear, and, we may also add, much too positive and practical, for our modern scientific students of religion. Nevertheless, plain men who, after reading the multitudinous volumes of Sir James Frazer and his younger contemporaries, complain that they are unable to see the wood for the trees, may do well to adopt Lord Herbert's conclusions.

The amazing range and interest of the study of religion is comprehensively and fascinatingly developed and illustrated in Dr. Bouquet's *Pelican*. He does not warn his readers against what have always seemed to us to be the three greatest dangers connected with this study: (1) The danger of false analogy which too readily assumes that the same external rite of one religion has the same internal meaning as in another religion. (2) The attempt at the outset of our study to secure a sound definition of religion. This can only be attained, if it ever is attained, at the end. Many years ago we collected something over forty definitions of religion. There was truth in all of them, but it became increasingly clear that not one of them was adequate. Religion is much more comprehensive, much more varied, and much more elusive—perhaps Protean would be the right descriptive adjective—than the *tiro* in this study imagined. (3) The third danger, and it was one against which F. D. Maurice constantly warned his hearers, is that of thinking of religion as something good. Experience and history shew that some religions can be for some persons, and for some communities, the very worst thing in the world. *Corruptio optimi pessima*.

When St. Paul viewed the religious life of the ancient world in which he lived (and yet not so ancient in the sense of 'dead and done with' as some moderns have supposed) he had come to certain conclusions about religion: (1) That religion is universal in the sense that all men are feeling after God if haply they may find him, for all mankind are his offspring (*Acts* xvii, 27, 28). (2) That the conception of the Divine Nature in all its power and Godhead presented to the human mind by the contemplation of the universe has been deliberately and criminally debased by substituting the worship of the creature—even the brute—for that of the Creator (*Rom.* i, 23 f.). (3) That this corruption and debasement of religion leads to a devastating debasement of morality and social life (*Rom.* i, 28). (4) That with the mission and message of Jesus Christ the supreme and final ideal of religion has been presented to mankind, who are in consequence called upon to repent—that is, change profoundly their outlook and practice—and become obedient to 'the Heavenly Vision.'

The modern study of religion has done nothing, so it seems to us, to overthrow the first, third and fourth of these conclusions of St. Paul. In the case of the second conclusion, modern scientific study of religion, by producing much evidence for an evolution of religion in which ethical monotheism is the last stage, not the first, exonerates mankind from the charge of deliberately and persistently substituting the lower, or even the lowest, for the highest in the sphere of religious worship. For instance, totemism, or the worship of animals, as St. Clement of Alexandria pointed out nearly two thousand years ago, preceded in human history, and gave place to, the higher worship of the celestial bodies—sun, moon and stars—and not *vice versa*. At the same time it ought to be added that scientific students of religion to-day are not by any means as convinced of the precise *order* of religious evolution as were their predecessors a generation ago. Evolution in Nature and History is not as logical in its operation as is the human mind: the process of evolution in Nature and History assumes the form of a helix, not of a straight line. On the other hand, St. Paul is right that there has been a great deal of criminal corruption of religious worship. It has been much to the credit of the Jews, as indeed to the Mohammedans also, and in a lesser degree to the Christians, that they have striven heroically to maintain purity of Divine worship against the dangers of naturalism, materialism and polytheism, which unceasingly and insidiously threaten its debasement.

In his chapter 'Gods many and Lords many' Dr. Bouquet asks: 'Why is it that many Roman Catholics so much prefer to address their devotions to a variety of saints, and to erect in their churches a multiplicity of altars, rather than to adopt the centralized simplicity of the Protestant Reformation?'

And we might even go nearer home and ask why is it that so many Anglo-Catholics are eagerly following this example? Dr. Bouquet gives one obvious answer: 'That a pluralistic view of the sacred is much more congenial to some people than to others.' But the question ought to be for Christians, not what is more 'congenial,' but what is in accordance with the mind and example of Christ.

SOME CONCLUSIONS OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

For many students of religion the chapter on 'New Materials' in Dr. Bouquet's *Pelican* will be the most eagerly read. A good example of the way in which modern research is constantly enlarging our knowledge of particular religious practices appears in the following excerpt:

'It used to be thought that the Seville cathedral dance at Whitsuntide was an isolated phenomenon, but investigations have lately revealed that

such dances were known throughout the Iberian peninsula. The Seville dance is recorded as far back as 1508, but must actually be much older. There was another at Toledo. As recently as 1932 at Braga there was a morris dance in church called "the dance of King David." At Zumarraya till recently there was a sword-dance in front of the high altar. At Oñate sword-dancers performed in front of the Host. At Arbérone in French Basse-Navarre a troupe of dancers performed on the feast of Corpus Christi—after the elevation of the Host. And so on. But not only in Iberia. Down to the nineteenth century the villagers of Batsford and Wishford had the right to dance in Salisbury Cathedral, and the apprentices of York claimed a similar right in the Minster on Shrove Tuesday! (p. 27).

Ritual dancing has probably been universal in religion: the totem dances of the Arunta; the dancing of the *tripodium* by Julius Caesar and his patrician friends in their sacred brotherhood; the dancing dervishes in Islam; the Pentecostal Dancers of modern American Protestantism; the exhortation chanted in English churches, 'Let them praise his Name in the dance' (*Ps.* cxlix, 3) testify to this. These survivals of sacred dancing in Catholicism testify, like many other Catholic customs, to the point made by Dean Inge that Catholicism is not only as old as Christianity, but a great deal older.

Of the vast new accumulations of religious data, Dr. Bouquet remarks:

'And so the materials go on being accumulated and interpreted. The position, in fact, with regard to religions will soon tend to resemble that prevailing in the world of science, *i.e.* the initiative will pass from the memorizing to the analytical part of the intelligence (see Crowther, Vol. I, pp. 143-4). The enormous mass of interesting data will get sorted and catalogued, and then some comparatively young men will astonish us, and flutter the hearts of conservatives in all denominations, by seeing what it all means. Already a number of disturbing inferences are being drawn' (p. 29).

One of these 'disturbing inferences' is the close relation that is being established between Catholicism and Buddhism.

But is there any need to wait for 'comparatively young men' to tell us 'what it all means'? Hasty inferences are to be deplored, but the situation is now ripe for a presentation of the Christian Religion in its true relation to all this vast body of accumulated knowledge concerning the religious history of mankind. Dr. Bouquet has done this in a very able way in his fine chapter 'General Theories: Epilogue.' There he has offered to his readers a comprehensive collection of competing alternative conclusions as to the real nature of religion. We make no attempt here to summarize them all, but select certain vital and practical alternatives from a collection of which some are dead and others have a merely theoretical existence. These vital and practical conclusions seem to us to be as follows:

- (1) 'First and foremost comes the theory of radical abandonment. All religions being based upon illusion, their study can be no more than a branch of anthropology, archaeology, psychology or sociology. This is the theory of Feuerbach, Frazer and Freud.'

This really presents the history of religious evolution in three words—Polytheism, Monotheism, Atheism—and summarizes the future of religion in the title of Guyau's volume, *The Non-Religion of the Future*.

- (2) 'The second we may call that of radical exclusiveness. This need not be Christian. It may be Buddhist, Jewish or Moslem, but its general classification is into "true" and "false."'

The really live issue to-day coming under this head is that presented by Dr. Kraemer (and his school) in his book *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* :

'All the religions of the world are forms of human, creaturely activity, and, as such, faulty, infected with that basic infirmity of the human race, self-centredness. No one form has any advantage over another. There is, and can be, therefore, no natural approach to Deity from the human side. So-called discovery can discover nothing. Only Deity himself can make his nature known.'

Dr. Kraemer thus carves religion into two classes and decisively severs the religion of 'Biblical realism,' as true, from all other religions, which are false. This classification appeals to fanatics but not to scientists : nor can it appeal to Christians whose faith is that of the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel. If the religion of Socrates was entirely false, the religion of Christ cannot be true. The right kind of classification, so the scientific study of religion indicates, is not into true religions and false religions, but into higher religions and lower religions.

- (3) 'The third we will call that of radical relativity. This is well exemplified in the Hibbert Lectures of L. P. Jacks, where he speaks of the religions of the world as hospitable caravanserais, in which the traveller may rest for a brief space, and then awake refreshed to pursue his journey of exploration. It is also the view of Spengler.'

This classification certainly emphasizes, what is true, that here, from the religious point of view, men are but strangers and pilgrims and that we have no continuing city, but it does not promise our arrival at the City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The result of the religious quest may be that of Atheist in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, who 'fell into a very loud laughter' when Christian declared that he was going to the celestial city. The routes may be many, the caravanserais numerous, but a rational and moral interpretation of the manifold religious experiences of mankind seems to demand a goal if the pilgrims are loyal to the Spirit which inspires their travels. *Ex umbris et imaginibus in lucem* ('Forth from the shadows and the illusions

into the light').

- (4) 'The fourth type of classification is detached and descriptive. . . . In the great age of religious creativity a peak, X, Y or Z, is somewhere reached, round which all other types group themselves, and to which they are all in some degree capable of being related, but which in itself is as absolute and final for religion as the work of Pheidias and Praxiteles is for sculpture, or the work of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for science' (p. 222).

This for us as scientists and practical Christians seems to be the soundest, as it is the most promising, method of classification. As we practise it we find ourselves travelling on the Delectable Mountains, not wandering amid the impenetrable and depressing undergrowth of the valleys.

After surveying aspects of religion 'from China to Peru,' many will concentrate on Dr. Bouquet's fine chapter on 'Hebrew and Christian Religion,' and, naturally, on the Christian part of it. Students of the Christian religion are too apt to study it piecemeal rather than as a whole. They stop at the end of the New Testament, or at the accession of Constantine, or at the end of the great Conciliar Period, or at the Great Schism between East and West; or they select the scholastic movement, or the Crusades, or the monastic orders, or the Protestant Reformation, or the history of the Church in some particular country, or modern Christian missions, as their subject of Christian study. Before everything, students should strive to see Jewish-Christian religion as a whole, and to bring their study down right to the present day.

What is going on to-day in the Christian religion is amazingly important and amazingly significant; and notwithstanding the tremendous shrinkage which Christianity has experienced in the last quarter of a century in Europe, Dr. Bouquet, like the heroic Roman consul after the Battle of Cannae, does not despair of the Republic. He sees, what we all see, that we are in the midst of a New Age of Religion with immense possibilities for weal or woe, enlightenment or obscurantism, salvation or perdition; that the Christian Church is faced with all the problems and potentialities of a New Reformation; and that while in some cases those behind cry 'Forward,' and those in front cry 'Back,' yet the Christian Church, in certain quarters at least, possessed of vitality and vigour, is striving to deal with the new situation.

'And so we enter the phase in which we live at present, one which has been labelled "ecumenical." Its main features are (i) efforts at federation, reunion, or mutual understanding; (ii) continued expansion; (iii) renewed hostility by the world.

External danger has driven religious people, whether Christian or non-Christian, to consider the principles which unite them against a purely secular view of life as perhaps greater than those which divide them. Yet the enemy is not precisely non-religion or anti-religion. At one time, no

doubt, it seemed as though a line could be drawn between (let us say) theists and anti-God propagandists. Now, however, the proper distinction would seem to be between one sort of religion and another. Even then it would not be correct to divide into Christians and non-Christians, since in certain fundamental respects a Christian would find himself much more in sympathy with a Tibetan Buddhist than with a Central European Fascist, though the latter might pay lip-service to the historical Jesus, wilfully misinterpreted. Or again, a Christian could not help feeling a considerable amount of agreement with a Communist of ex-Moslem Turkestan, where the collapse of the horrible government of the Emir of Bokhara has led to an emancipation of women and to a cleansing of society which are in complete harmony with the desires of progressive Christians.

Nevertheless, for our purpose, the main features of this period have been (i) the extensive growth of what has been called "the new Christianity," with an art, a worship and even a literature of its own, and (ii) the numerous and never-ceasing efforts to look at Christianity as a common world-religion in a sense in which no other age has ever looked at it. A scientific observer must, of course, record the possibility that this specific instance of religion is no more destined to be the final world-faith than the League of Nations inaugurated in 1919 is destined to be the final form of the World-State. That is only fair. But he must certainly add that the ecumenical movement in Christianity has done more than anything which has preceded it in history (more even than Stoicism) to render familiar the idea of a common world-family of human beings, possessing in common a single spiritual creed. If Communism avows a similar ideal, it owes the origin of that ideal to its rival (or perhaps to the fact that Karl Marx was a Jew, standing on the shoulders of many generations of Jews who looked for some kind of realization of the Kingdom of God on earth). Never before, in spite of formidable opposition, have Christians thought more consistently or courageously about transforming the world, and never before have they shown so much enterprise in constructive works of loving-kindness' (p. 191 f.).

In one brief sentence Dr. Bouquet reminds his readers of a fact about the Christian Religion which Christian leaders so often ignore in their plans and operations :

'Christians are bound to assume that by far the larger part of the life of their movement lies ahead of it ; and they cannot wisely regard the past as for ever fixing its form' (p. 194).

That learned prelate, John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury, was much impressed by this consideration and regarded it as a curious phenomenon of Christian history that the Church seemed always to regard its past on earth as longer than its future. Of course this erroneous way of viewing historical Christianity accounts in some measure for the immense weight of traditionalism and conservatism with which the Christian Church is burdened. If we thought, as Bishop Wordsworth did, that the Christian Church had at least 20,000 years of life on this earth ahead of it—possibly, indeed, 200,000 years—we should be less concerned than we are with looking backward, not for spiritual inspiration but for actual historical precedents, to enable us to deal with existent situations which are without exact parallel in the past.

Dr. Bouquet is inclined perhaps to overstress conscious mystical union with the historic Jesus rather than obedience to the guidance of the living Spirit of the eternal Christ as the essential Christian experience. This will appear to some to be a dangerous distinction. It is dangerous, but it seems to us to be necessary in the light of our modern studies. The distinction may be illustrated by the following dictum :

‘Anyone who understands Kant knows that you must go beyond Kant : but anyone who understands Hegel knows that you cannot go beyond Hegel.’

In the case of the historic Jesus, modern research has compelled us to realize that if we would be loyal to his Spirit of Truth which is to guide us into all truth, we must go beyond the historic records. On the other hand, if we realize the relation of the Divine Spirit to the historic Jesus we must as strongly realize that we cannot go beyond his inspiration and guidance.

If there be a weakness in Dr. Bouquet’s presentation of Christianity in his *Pelican*, it is his failure to stress adequately the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Christianity is pre-eminently the Religion of the Divine Spirit, the Spirit of the Eternal Father supremely manifested in the historic Jesus, and ever-present with the human race to inspire every individual, in so far as he opens the door of his personality to admit that influence—a process in which human discovery and Divine Revelation are not opposed but are united as two harmonious interpretations of a single experience. If the Christian Religion be interpreted in this way, all the religions of mankind are seen as a unity. The Science of Religion shews us the altar with its inscription, ‘*To an Unknown God*,’ set up in the heart of every man. Each of the religions of the world strives to erase that inscription and to engrave in its place the name of her own deity. The Science of Religion scrutinizes and records them all. The Evolution of Religion, and the needs of mankind, alike predict that the final name to be inscribed on that altar must be the ‘*Our Father*’ of our Lord Jesus Christ.

COUNTRY PARSONS AND THEIR PROBLEMS.

We recently asked a clergyman who had spent almost all his ministry in the Dominions and in Continental chaplaincies, but whom the war has located in an English country parish, what his impressions were of rural church life in England. We think it worth while to call attention to several of the points made in his reply. The first thing he noticed was the entire absence of anti-clericalism :

‘In France and on the Continent generally there is a strong clerical and an equally strong anti-clerical party. The latter wish to abolish

religion, regarding it as an opiate. Now, in England I find no trace of this anti-clerical party in the country districts, and I believe even in the towns it is rare to come across it. The people, it seems to me, whether they go to church or not, are ready to be friends with the clergy. It may be thought that even in France, in the country districts, anti-clericalism is not strong, but this is not the case. As someone has said : The peasant knows he cannot be wrong if he votes against "those who wash their hands and those who go to church."

This is most gratifying and accords with our own experience. On the other hand, we have recently heard from two unprejudiced sources, complaints that the attempts of the parochial clergy to introduce, and even enforce, confession, especially in the case of those being prepared for Confirmation, is deeply resented.

It is the lack of competent Christian teaching by the clergy which seemed to our correspondent the most serious defect in our rural church life.

'The real difficulty in England, it seems to me, is the inefficiency of those who set out to teach Christianity. We often hear people sigh for the devout Christians that are to be found in France. But who made these devout Christians? Not the priests. It is indeed the meddlesome ways of the priests that provoke the open hostility of the multitude. Those who in France are responsible for the devout Christians are the Sisters. Their teaching Orders established in almost every village exert a wonderful influence on the girls, and thus indirectly on the men of the next generation. We have nothing corresponding to them in our country parishes. For while we have Sisters attached to the English Church, their number is so small as to effect little, while the fact that their teaching is often in ritual so much in advance of that of the average parish church tends to create divisions in the Church. Still, I can attest from my experience of a very large girls' school, gradually built up by the Kilburn Sisters in West Australia, that numbers of girls were won for the Church through their teaching, who otherwise would have grown up young heathen. That one school had a powerful influence on the whole State. I am sure the same could not be said of the much better endowed Church school for boys. I doubt if it had any more influence on the boys, for good or bad, than the secular schools. I know the impossibility in England of ever again having large Orders of Sisters, and I feel very dubious whether the community as a whole has the right to expect that large numbers of women shall make the sacrifices which such a system demands.

As things now are in rural England, we have to look to the clergy to be the teachers of the Christian Religion. Yet how few among them can, in any real sense, be regarded as competent teachers of that religion. How few of them seem to have any idea of converting people. The most they aim at is getting them to come to church.

Of all the clergy I have come across in the last year, only one to my knowledge encourages young people to come to his house in the evening and have fireside talks on the problems of life. But he is not English, but French, and was a Roman Catholic priest. Perhaps his own difficulties have made him sympathetic, while his constant wide reading and fine intellect enable him to give more than mere platitudes. It is really the fireside talks, and not the set addresses in church, which are going to help the ordinary man and dissolve his difficulties about being a Christian. There are many who do not believe they can rightly come to church be-

cause they do not believe in some mediaeval conception of the Divinity of Christ, or in a material heaven and hell and so forth.

Now, the theological colleges do not teach their men, if indeed they can be taught, to hold such fireside talks, but rather to hold a vast number of services at which the same faithful few are the only ones present. I offended a bishop by refusing to give up my visiting of large centres of men instead of holding daily services for, at the most, three old women who conceived that I was their personal chaplain.

My own opinion is that rural England is quite willing to be Christian if only they can find Christian teachers, but they are not willing to become Christians if their teachers can teach them so little of the real article. They realize, what so often their teachers do not, that the Middle Ages have passed. It must seem to many that if the new Archbishop of Canterbury were more concerned to have a teaching clergy, and if they did their educational work and left the State to look after itself, both Church and State would profit immensely.

My stay in the country does not discourage me, far from it, but it shews me that to be a teacher one must be a learner, and especially a student of one's students.'

We are sure that our correspondent is right about the need for teaching the Christian Religion in a very practical and modern way in country parishes, and that if it can be done in private this is best of all. But this is no easy matter. Country people are very shy and English clergymen are very diffident. However, it can be done in the case of young people. In the case of their elders it is almost impossible.

It seems to us that if the seasons of Advent and Lent could be used regularly at the Sunday evening services for mission preaching by visiting missionaries, who would take some important Christian subject and present it both intellectually and practically, this might do much to build up the knowledge of the Christian Religion in country places. Such a proposal would demand the organizing of bodies of diocesan missionaries who would be prepared to devote their Sunday evenings in Advent and Lent to this work. These mission preachers would need to have their expenses paid out of a diocesan fund, and if these missionaries were, as they would be in many cases, parish priests, they would need to have their places supplied in their own parishes by other mission preachers. In the Roman Church we believe that much is done in this way by the Preaching Orders. In England, it would not be missionaries drawn from our Monastic Orders who could supply what is most needed, but parochial clergymen who are trained teachers and who have not only illumination but conversion in view when they occupy the pulpit. Such missions might do much, not simply to help rural parishioners, but to stimulate and encourage rural parsons.

THE MALVERN CONFERENCE

By the REV. RONALD PRESTON, B.Sc. (Lond.), B.A. (Oxon.).

THE publication of the papers read at the Malvern Conference of January, 1941,* brings to a head a theological issue of great importance which has underlain Christian thought in England on several social and political questions for at least the last decade. That issue is the relation of the Christian doctrine of man, his nature and destiny, to the basic assumptions of the different social sciences which study man and his world, and in particular to those of the science of economics. In turn, this same issue is bound up with the question of the validity and extent of the concept of 'natural law.' As the editor of *Theology* pointed out in an important article in the February 1942 number, that term has never dropped out of Roman Catholic moral theology, though it has in non-Roman thought. Its meaning is far from clear on examination, and what is surprising is to find it being widely used now in certain sections of the Church of England as if it had a clear and definite connotation which there is no need to define.

The question arises at the very beginning of the volume. In a short introduction, Dr. Temple says that Christian activity must be carried on at three distinct levels. There is, first, the task of proclaiming the Gospel in its purity and fulness; this is the limit of the Church's proper sphere of action. Next, there is the working out of 'middle axioms,' *i.e.* maxims which mediate between the fundamental principles and the tangle of particular problems; this was the work of the Malvern Conference. Lastly, there is the working out of actual political programmes, on which equally loyal Christians may have diametrically opposite opinions.

It is with regard to these middle axioms that queries arise. Are all Christians expected to agree on them? Can they be worked out on a theological basis alone? Or do they imply a study of the facts of a situation before they can be worked out? How absolute or relative are they? How detailed can they be? Unfortunately, none of the papers discuss these points, but for the most part assume one particular view. (Exactly how far Dr. Temple himself shares that view does not emerge, though to judge from his recent 'Penguin Special,' *Christianity and Social Order*, he makes considerable modifications in it.) The assumed view of most of

* *The Life of the Church and the Order of Society*, being the proceedings of the Archbishop of York's Conference at Malvern. (Longmans, Green, 1942. pp. 225. 10s. 6d.)

the contributors is that the middle axioms are to be found in the concepts of natural law or natural order. Two corollaries appear to follow. The first is that all Christians, if they had a sound theology, would agree on the content of the natural law or the axioms. 'Sound' in this context is hardly distinguishable from neo-Thomist. Secondly, the natural law or axioms are arrived at by rational deduction through the exercise of the natural reason without recourse to any of the particular specialisms which study the social and political systems.

These are the dominant assumptions of the book; broadly speaking, it is the angle of approach of the Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology or the 'Christendom' group. But there are other strains. It is doubtful how far Mr. Donald MacKinnon and Mr. J. Middleton Murry share these views. It is quite clear that Sir Richard Acland and Mr. Kenneth Ingram do not; their pre-suppositions are more those of a liberal theology. One wonders how far the heterogeneous conference members, many of whom certainly did not share the 'Christendom' approach to begin with, realized the assumptions behind what the various speakers said to them. However, that is another story.

The uncertainty as to the meaning of natural law is forced upon the reader by Dr. Temple's opening address, which is one of the best things in the book, a model of compact thinking, clearly expressed. Dealing with the break-up of the mediaeval synthesis, he finds that the great question for Anglicans is 'do we or do we not follow the Reformers in their rejection of natural theology?' For 'they pressed the doctrine of the fall of man to a point where human reason is regarded as incapable of apprehending any divine truth.' The book assumes that we do not follow them, and so far Anglicans will surely be agreed. It is the next step in the argument that causes difficulty. It is assumed that because human reason is not fallen so far that it cannot apprehend divine truth, it can therefore arrive at the truths of a divinely given natural order for the social and political world without being trained, or using the work of those trained, in the different sciences which study that world. This appears to be a complete *non-sequitur*. What we should regard as a more legitimate deduction is, to use the same terminology, that man has not fallen so far that he cannot appreciate a truth and a right transcending his own opinions and interests; that he has a conscience which can be appealed to; but that any particular interpretation of truth and right is contingent and relative, and to a certain extent corrupted, and in any case involves an element of specialized knowledge. In passing, we may note that there is another unclarified distinction. Is the natural law deducible by all men by the aid of natural reason independently

of the Christian revelation, or is it deduced from the specifically Christian doctrines of creation, incarnation, and so on? On the whole, mediaeval writers took the former view; our writers seem to take the latter. Dr. Temple, for instance, says:

‘We now find ourselves fighting for human rights and a conception of life which have no justification except in the Christian doctrine of God and man.’

We cannot stay to explore this issue, which is raised again in Mr. T. S. Eliot’s austere little paper on the difference between a Christian and a humanist philosophy of education:

‘We may be in accord with the humanists in everything they want; they may be invaluable allies; but we must remember that Christian doctrine provides the only rational justification for the programme which we may share with them.’

Tantalisingly, he does not work this out, on the ground that he has done so elsewhere.

However, this is a subsidiary question to our main one. Whether we base our conception of natural law on the Christian revelation or not, the question still remains, how far can we deduce the right relations between things or persons, or between different things in the social world, without bringing in the different specialisms; how detailed can we legitimately become without their aid? I would maintain that the Christian view of (1) the dignity of man as created in the image of God, and (2) his sinfulness because he perpetually makes himself instead of God the centre of his world, does lead to certain *general* principles of criticism when considering the social and political world. Putting them negatively, we can deduce from the first point that poverty, insecurity and arbitrary inequality are undesirable; and from the second that social power must be responsible and subject to check, otherwise it will certainly be wielded for corrupt ends. ‘Power corrupts,’ begins the famous saying of Lord Acton. But these are principles of criticism to be used in evaluating any social system and are never fully realized in practice by any. To understand how things work now, what can best be done to improve the situation, given the existing tendencies and resources, in the light of these over-arching criteria, we need technical knowledge. This assumes that the social sciences are to a certain definite extent neutral and that their autonomy must be respected. At the same time, knowing the weakness of all specialists for interpreting the universe in terms of their own specialism, we must watch lest a disguised anthropology creeps in. Economics has certain technical norms, such as efficiency, regularity and adaptability, which to a greater or lesser extent can always be subordinated to non-economic considerations, but which it is folly to ignore altogether, as it is not to pay heed to the help that that

science can give in avoiding the choosing of contradictory policies. Of course, any policy implies a philosophy behind it, and here for the Christian his doctrine comes in. Much work needs to be done on the exact extent to which a fundamental doctrine of man is implied in the social sciences, but this is surely the right place from which to start, not from the over-detailed deductions of natural law which is where most of these papers begin. None of them shews any signs of having faced up to the serious criticism of their whole procedure in Emil Brunner's great book on Christian ethics, *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen* (English translation *The Divine Imperative*), especially in chapter 25 on 'Autonomy, Natural Law and Love,' and in a special appendix on Natural Law (pp. 627-633¹), where he comes to the conclusion that

'What God requires for the ordering of the conditions of society cannot be rationally deduced from a rational system, but it can only be discovered on each particular occasion, in obedience to the revealed will of God, by means of the reason.'

This is another way of stating the position for which we have just contended.

The consequences of not starting here are plainly visible in this volume in two respects; in the philosophy of history that results, and in the analysis of the modern world which is given. Canon V. A. Demant is the best example of the former. His paper to a large extent repeats the argument of his book *The Religious Prospect*. This is his thesis:

'If we look at the revolutions of post-renaissance Europe in a dialectical way, we get a forceful impression of a series of struggles to embody a wholeness of life, each answering the last, but missing the wholeness by giving absolute divine value to the previously neglected elements of it. This impression appears to me to indicate a definite structure of the human spirit and a definite structure of society to respond to it, a frame in which, however, there can be many variations. England is always seeking it. Europe has come nearest to finding it piecemeal, only to break up its approximations again. I think, therefore, we must be bold enough to envisage the post-war task as the fulfilment of the destiny of Europe. . . . So long as men are moved by fear of what they reject and not by faith in what they make for, they experience the wrath of God. . . . We in England stand in a situation in which, so far as I am able to see, there can be no further European revolution which is a negative reaction to the last' (pp. 133-4).

That is his fundamental position. Notice that it assumes the uneasy alliance of biblical Hebraic thought with Aristotelianism, which was characteristic of the Middle Ages, to be a kind of norm. Here, of course, is where natural law, which took such a large place in scholastic thought, comes in. This is what underlies the phrase 'a definite structure of society.' The remark 'mankind is

¹ References are to the English translation by Olive Wyon. (Lutterworth Press, 1937.)

always seeking it' might be considered an indication that Dr. Demant thinks of it as a norm which will always stand over against the partial achievements of a particular era (a position for which we have contended), but the last sentence implies something realizable after the war. Christianity no longer becomes, to paraphrase A. N. Whitehead, a religion for ever in search of a social system in which to embody itself. There is to be an end in Dr. Demant's view to the dialectical process, just as there is in Marxism. This is the whole weakness of his position; a too detailed and specific deduction of the content of natural law and of the desirable social system to be based on it, so that the whole concept becomes insufficiently transcendental.

This brings us to the second point, the unsatisfactory analysis of the modern world which results from such premisses. It is not surprising to find that a common ignorance of economics unites most of the contributors, since on their theory such knowledge is not necessary. (In the latter part of Dr. Demant's paper, for instance, there is a number of economic generalizations of a hit and miss type, some sound, some not.) Nor is it surprising to find that a Professor of Philosophy gave a paper involving a discussion of the re-casting of the monetary system, unemployment and a possible post-war slump. Professor Hodges, however, has significantly had second thoughts and has refused to have his paper printed in the volume. Again, it is quite in keeping to find Mr. W. G. Peck once more talking nonsense about the economic system, as he has done for years past, and building up a great case on a crudely fallacious under-consumption theory. He also shews an inability to understand the different possible kinds of collectivism, consigning them all to the devil. I rather suspect that the 'autonomous economic,' which he castigates fiercely, really boils down to a system which allows consumers to buy what they think they want and not what someone else thinks they should have. If so, one gathers from the general tenour of his paper that he ought to approve of it. If not, what *does* it mean? The Archbishop challenges those who disagree with the assumptions of most of the speakers to do so on *theological* grounds, and we gladly take up the challenge. Mr. Peck's economic errors have a theological origin in a theology which forbids him to take economics seriously, because he has an unsatisfactory view of natural law, which in turn goes back to the inadequacies of the Thomist synthesis which he takes as a norm. (With other of his theological statements, such as 'the spirit of man is born for freedom in a community of free spirits,' we cordially agree.) Mr. Maurice Reckitt is also dominated by much the same assumptions and, in a paper which is more clever than profound, certainly fails to sustain his central thesis that war

is a logical upshot of the present economic and social order. It is noteworthy that there is no analysis or grasp among these writers of the working of the war-time economic system, an extreme form of regulated capitalism. Yet the way in which the problems it presents are dealt with will to a major extent condition what is possible in the post-war world, whose foundations they are so busy laying in the abstract.

We turn now to a brief notice of the remaining papers, which raise other points than the major one on which we have concentrated. Miss Dorothy Sayers contributes an extremely able and well constructed paper to argue that the Church must sanctify the *whole* of human life without, however, identifying itself with any relative and transitory social, political or artistic system. In the course of it she makes an illuminating comparison between the kind of community the Church should be, compared with the intense but narrow fellowship of the actors' world on the one hand and the totalitarian exclusiveness of the Nazi 'church' on the other. She ends with a strong plea for intellectual integrity in the Church in all spheres, and especially with regard to the arts.

About Mr. Mackinnon's paper it is hard to write. It is certainly a difficult one, and despite his *apologia* there seems no inherent reason why the subject of 'Revelation and Social Justice' should be so obscure. Moreover, the proofs have been very carelessly read. I am far from sure that I understand him, but it seems that he makes an attempt to ride the neo-Thomist and Barthian horses at the same time, which is more ingenious than successful. The first part is taken up with an enquiry as to

'whether Christian dogmas are in any sense to be regarded as factual propositions and intelligible in some sense analogous to that in which the factual propositions concerning the external world are intelligible.'

In so far as I understand the subsequent attack on Kant, he seems to be denying the relativity of all theological propositions on the assumption that the concept of being is not itself analogical and relative, which I should dispute. There follows a denial of the possibility of a synthesis of knowledge because man is a fallen creature (here the Barthian strain comes out); but surely that is no reason for not trying; the law of love is equally an impossibility, but that is no reason for making no effort at all. Rather, as Niebuhr would say, both are impossible impossibilities. In the midst of these rather dry bones, there are some powerful passages in which the author describes man as either responding to the invitation of communion with God, or else as lost in an abyss, and in which the scandal of the Church is driven relentlessly home. It is actually in the family of God that Satan achieves his most complete victories. 'Father, if it be possible, let this church pass from me.'

Yet this same Church is the place wherein the scandal of the Cross is for ever actual, and it is the Cross which 'reveals the final secret of the relation of man and God. Apart from the darkness of Golgotha we know neither what we do nor what we are.'

Mr. Middleton Murry's paper is a moving denunciation of modern society and its large-scale techniques as an unholy thing, violating the integrity of human personality. It is not so much a rational argument as a statement of feeling, not unlike that of the late Eric Gill, ending with the words

'the Church fails in leadership because it shews no signs of having known despair, no evidence of having been *terrified* by its own impotence.'

We have already seen that Sir Richard Acland and Mr. Kenneth Ingram proceed on different assumptions from most of the contributors. The former's short but lively paper is devoted to the abolition of private property in the means of production, as a moral issue, a cure for selfishness. He hardly seems to appreciate the extent to which selfishness can corrupt any social system unless strong safeguards, both positive and negative, are thought out against it. He does, however, make a very good point against the many Christians (including the Archbishop himself) who are so anxious to give labour a share in management that they overlook the safeguards necessary. Speaking to Dr. Temple, he said :

'I gravely fear that your suggestion might give the employees a vested interest in all those things which the employers in their industry were inclined to do against the interests of the community and of the workers in other industries.'

Mr. Ingram pursues the same theme, arguing cogently for a type of planning which will safeguard freedom.

'The special responsibility of Christians is to ensure that individual liberty is furthered and not impaired by a socialist civilization.'

There are some hasty economic generalizations later on in the paper, including the dragging out of that thoroughly question-begging phrase 'production for use and not for profit.' No one can earn any income, wages or profits, unless the public thinks the product sufficiently useful to buy. What he is really objecting to is the unequal distribution of money income which gives those who are wealthiest the largest say in determining the course of production. Let us attack the real source of the trouble and not use words which obscure it, nor tinker about with consumers' choice. Mr. Ingram's economic error arises, not through a theory of natural law, as in the case of Mr. Peck, but through taking semi-Marxist clichés without examination, to the neglect of economic knowledge.

It remains to end where we began, with Dr. Temple. He stands for no mere return to scholasticism, for in discussing it he says (1)

that Maritain has injected into the thought of Aquinas a large dose of what is most characteristic of the Renaissance and the Reformation, an appreciation of individual personality; (2) that neither Thomism nor the neo-Thomism of Maritain is as adequate as the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr to dealing with the nature of sin and its necessary consequence in society—power politics. 'Man puts himself in the centre where God ought to be, thus claiming in effect to be the god of his own world.' Or, as Mr. Mackinnon says, man as a sinner is 'the spiritual Titan, who makes himself equal to God and seeks to make God his servant.' Dr. Temple's closing review smooths over the intellectual confusion of the final session of the conference, the differing view-points among the papers, the doubts as to how far the conference members realized the implications of what they were hearing and discussing, and the lack of relation between the report of the conference (I.C.F., 2*d.*) and its proceedings. Stranger still, all the very thorough work put into the Oxford Ecumenical Conference of 1937, far more carefully prepared than Malvern and presented to a gathering far better prepared, is never once referred to, and Dr. Temple goes back to C.O.P.E.C. at Birmingham in 1924 for purposes of comparison. Yet Malvern cannot compare with Oxford in authority. Perhaps this ignoring of Oxford is due to the theology which dominated the leaders at Malvern, less sound in my opinion than that underlying the report of Section 3 of the Oxford Conference, which is an excellent document. There is a danger that many Anglicans with a social concern will be led to accept ideas whose theological implications they may not realize and would not like if they did realize. One cannot help feeling that Malvern was both intellectually unsatisfactory and also left much to be desired as a conference. Its findings have achieved an importance they do not deserve. But the papers can be considered on their own merits, as we have tried to do. If they had had to stand the criticism of other view-points, as the Oxford ones had, they would have been more valuable. That is the danger of an in-grown conference.

More work must be done on the question of natural law, and I believe it will shew that its theoretical unsoundness caused it to break down in the past, and that Catholic ethics will never be able to cope with the modern world by trying to revive it in any but a greatly modified form which allows for the insights of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

CONFESSIO FIDEI OF AN ARISTOTELIAN CHRISTIAN

By H. E. CREWDSON, M.A., Vicar of St James', West Derby, Liverpool.

MANY of the currents of thought remembered during the war of 1914—1918 are becoming active again. But a movement which is surprisingly and disturbingly new is the violent reaction from belief in the inevitability of moral progress, which deserves the title of 'the New Pessimism.' Perhaps I have received a false impression from the little which I have read, and the much more which I have not read, of the Jeremiads of the 'new pessimists.' Perhaps I am wrong in suspecting gloomy deans and other prophets of woe of spiritual defeatism, and therefore of heresy. In any case I do not forget that in pessimism and its causes, from bilious attacks to world catastrophe, there is nothing new—or lasting. But since we have been affirming for the last twenty years that 'every day and in every way' we (and our world) are 'growing better and better,' we do not like being told that it was all an illusion. Not that we really thought—many of us—that it was anything else; but when a lot of books are written by clever people to tell us that it wasn't, the rest of us are naturally impressed. It sends a cold shiver down my clerical spine. And spines other than clerical, if I am not mistaken, are similarly affected.

Although I am a clergyman, my mentality, perhaps, is fairly representative of the minds of many other men (and women) who have had a similar educational and social background to my own—without the intellectual and moral handicap of several years spent in the clerical profession. I differ from them, unfortunately, in certain respects. I have what is described (by those who know me best) as a 'one-track mind.' Perhaps it is because my range of ideas is unusually limited that, when an idea takes hold of me (so they tell me), I run it to death. Just now I am running the idea (more truly it is running me and my way of life) that the antidote to the 'New Pessimism' is in a synthesis of thought between Christ and Aristotle. And I have a peculiar conviction (my Quaker great-grandfather would have called it a 'concern') that it is somewhere between the old school tie and the clerical collar that the answer—this antidote—lies. (If the pessimists are entirely right, presently there will be no old school tie, and no clerical collar—and so, no answer.)

All of the little Aristotle which I once read I have forgotten, except a few phrases which I have always liked. *ENERGEIA KAT' ARETEN*¹ is the one which I remember best. Its meaning, I think, is this: 'virtuous energy,' 'activity on right lines,' is something that works and works *in* life. Things which do not work and do not move are dead things. Things which, of their own volition, work and move (intransitively) or move (transitively) other things or other people are alive. No living thing is completely self-contained. You know it is alive by the mark it makes upon its surroundings. Another phrase which I remember, 'living according to nature,' *KATA PHUSIN ZEN*,² was frequently used by the Stoics. 'According to nature' is the equivalent of 'according to virtue,' assuming that it is man's nature to be virtuous. But what is 'virtue'? The Prophet of Nazareth has supplied the answer which the logician could not give. The Gospel of Jesus makes sense of the Ethics of Aristotle. What Aristotle's philosophy lacks, John's theology provides. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' John's prescription, therefore, is very simple; but when it is mixed with Aristotelian 'Energy' (as it was mixed by James, 'Faith without works is dead'), it is extremely potent. Basically it is not new; it is the old formula *ENERGEIA KAT' ARETEN* with the addition of just two words, *KAT' AGAPEN*.³ But by them its whole quality is transformed. Philosophy becomes Gospel. The essence of the formula is still derived from reason, but also, to a largely increased degree, from faith. Justification is by faith—faith in God's nature of Love, faith in His loving purposes for mankind, through ourselves as His instruments.

The root cause of the 'New Pessimism,' apart from the effects of war neurosis, is the crashing of castles in the air which lacked foundation. 'Civilization' has failed to shelter mankind from moral catastrophe. 'Progress' has become relapse; and disillusionment, if not despair, has descended upon complacent optimism. But if the house that was built upon the sand has fallen, the house that was built upon the rock still stands. The basis of communion with God—the 'virtuous activity' which it is natural for man, God's child, to show—remains. And if neither man nor God, neither Aristotle nor Christ, with uninterrupted progress have entered into their glory, what in the working out of God's purposes is a mere 2,000 years? How many millions of years have already been used—may yet be waiting to be used—by the developing *ENERGEIA* of God for its expression in human history? Is it not because we lack perspective that the credit of the 'New Pessimism,' at the moment, stands so high?

¹ 'Energy according to virtue.'

² 'To live according to nature.'

³ 'According to love.'

I am myself, in some respects, a pessimist. For the clerical mind, or what is popularly supposed to represent it, I see no future. I think that the iconoclasts on the one hand, and the traditionalists on the other may continue to keep the Church (as we know her now) in a perpetual and disabling state of tension, until the appointed day of her dissolution. A modicum of foresight is to be noted, here and there, among the higher clergy. Scattered outcrops of intelligence occur, now and then, among the humbler sort. But the chances of a successful major operation upon the Church, sufficiently drastic to ensure her survival (in approximately her present shape), appear slight. Nor does it seem that the Church, staffed and constituted as at present, is likely to lead in post-war reconstruction on such lines as those suggested by the Malvern Conference. What does it matter? I wonder, pessimistically, whether the application of some of the remedies prescribed for the relief of our social ills would not prove more deadly than the disease. I am so far unconvinced—or so far unprincipled—as to be ready to revert at times to my innate (and admittedly self-interested) conservatism. There is a war on, and things are happening. But why worry? Wait and see!

In this confusion of mind I turn with relief to Aristotle and to Christ. ENERGEIA at least has meaning and potency. Not that I am able to pose as an exponent of 'virtuous energy.' I am not. Here the first person singular forces me into the confessional. I am an Aristotelian by faith, but not by works. I am lazy by nature. I hate making decisions. Acting upon them I dislike still more; except occasionally when one attractive idea starts expanding (disproportionately more often than not) in my one-track mind, and I have to 'get busy or bust'! But my inconsistency does not blind me. I know that Aristotle is right. I know that activity is for me KATA PHUSIN—because of what I am—my life. If I stop doing things, moving myself and other people, I might as well be dead. I mean by 'doing' and 'moving' (as I think Aristotle meant) an activity which does not necessarily produce immediate or visible results. 'Thinking' is 'doing.' Rest and recreation are 'virtuous activities,' if they are needed to enable me to become appropriately and effectively active at another time. '*Reculer pour mieux sauter*' is linked in my philosophy with ENERGEIA KAT' ARETEN. The rule for me is simple—at every moment I should know (if I am awake) what I am doing and why. 'Virtuous activity' connotes concentration of my will power and my consequent action (or inaction) upon a known line. By this I fulfil my nature, I live, I grow.

The principal solvent of pessimism, as it is the proved antidote to trouble of any kind, is to have something to do, and to get busy

in doing it. I do not suggest that the clergy, as a class, are prone to laziness. But it may fairly be said of us, I think, that generically we lack an ability to concentrate upon the matter in hand. (Most of our misfortunes may be ascribed to this cause—from parsonic voices to professors of divinity, from parochial church councils to a prevailing notion that the clergy, intellectually as well as socially, are a race apart.) The reason for this is plain; ‘Athanasius we know, and Augustine we know, but who is Aristotle?’ Largely it is the fault of our teachers. They should have taught us to be Aristotelians first, and Christians afterwards. First they should have stimulated our activities, and taught us to use them intelligently and effectively. Detailed advice regarding the manner of their application should have followed. The professors of divinity are to blame. It stands to the credit of purveyors of the old school tie, and of university dons who have known their place—and allowed their pupils to find theirs—that they have not included in their *‘Index Expurgatorius’* the wisdom of Aristotle. And so it has come about that the public school traditions of purposeful activity on corporate lines have percolated, sporadically, into the Church. There are also a few clergy, soundly educated in the school of commerce, capable of a concentrated and effective activity upon other lines. But over the average product of the theological colleges, or of other tabloid methods of infusing knowledge of an ecclesiastical and biblical type, Aristotle would weep. The clergy, estimable fellows though they are, often more kindly, more conscientious and, in some respects, less ignorant than their peers, are seldom, in the Aristotelian sense, men of affairs. Such *ENERGEIA* as they can command is of course (except in cases happily rare) conspicuously *KAT’ ARETEN*. But it is seldom *KATA DUNAMIN*.⁴ It lacks the vigour which gets things done, and leaves its mark upon everything which it touches. Individually and collectively it lacks ‘dynamic.’

It goes without saying that *ENERGEIA* which is in every sense *KAT’ ARETEN* is also *KATA DUNAMIN*, for activity which is desultory and half-hearted cannot be wholly virtuous. (A homily upon the Day of Pentecost might follow here: but I will be serious.) The Church’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and of His work, I know is true, as true as any formal statement of eternal truth can be said to be true. But when the Holy Spirit convinces me of sin, throws light upon my path and fires me with enthusiasm for the service of God’s Kingdom, I care little for history, and less for dogma. Seething within me, God’s *ENERGEIA* seeks expression in movement and in life. This *DUNAMIS* of God, God’s ‘Dynamic,’ must, like his only Son, have His manifestation in outward and visible

⁴ ‘According to power.’

form. There must be another incarnation. This time it must be, partly at least, in me. And like the incarnation of Jesus it must display, translated into terms of human personality, the nature of God. It must be *ENERGEIA ANTHROIKE KATA THEIAN PHUSIN*.⁵

It is by these ways of thought that I have reached the heart of my 'concern.' This is, to add to *KAT' ARETEN* the words *KAT' AGAPEN*, and so to find in Aristotle, interpreted and enriched by Jesus, the antidote to 'the new Pessimism.' The impotence of man to work out his own salvation without the aid of the Spirit of God has been demonstrated beyond doubt. But despite the war—because of the war—is there no self-sacrifice, no martyrdom? Is there no love, no *AGAPE*—love that is twisted, tortured, deceived, but still triumphantly alive? This is the hour of Love's Crucifixion. But also of Love's Epiphany! 'Greater love hath no man than this . . . '—never is God more fully or more evidently in any man, than when he lays down his life for his friend. Do soldiers killed in battle invariably go to heaven? It was Mahomet not Jesus, who said they do. But what Jesus did say leaves no room for doubt. He said (in so many words) that the sacrifice of a man who dies for others, for duty and for truth, is the self-offering of a man who loses his life for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. And He promised that such a one should find it. Further than this we cannot see. But as it is seen *sub specie aeternitatis*⁶ (in the divine conservatory, in the 'many mansions' of God, all the sordidness, all the wickedness of war eliminated), what a flowering of souls, what rare blooms of the spirit, are now unfolding! Into what lordly chambers, what sublime vestibules of the Heavenly Temple are those living stones being built, those richly moulded stones, polished by tribulation, inscribed with the simple words *KAT' AGAPEN*! There is reason for poetry here, for the *Sursum Corda* of all believers in the triumph of the Cross of Christ: there is none for pessimism.

If *ENERGEIA KAT' AGAPEN* is the true picture of God's working, as it is of the only right and virtuous activity of man, is it the generally agreed basis of our Christian witness? Jesus and His apostles have told us that it ought to be. 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' A phrase which Aristotle might have written in collaboration with Augustine is this, 'the sacramental quality of right personal relationships as a means of communion with God.' In this phrase I find, as a parish priest, my *summa theologica*⁷ and my rule of

⁵ 'Human energy according to the divine nature.'

⁶ 'Under the aspect of eternity.'

⁷ 'Sum total of theology.'

life. I have not found it easily. (Once more I enter the confessional.) I am by disposition neither unselfish nor sweet-tempered. Being self-centred I am not naturally sympathetic. I would rather talk than listen, rather take than give. I do not suffer fools gladly. I tend to be superior, and harshly critical. I ought, therefore, to be suffering for my sins (I have done so in the past), and life in my parish should be a perpetual dogfight. But it isn't! I live at peace with my parishioners (most of the time). Most of them are pleased to see me when I visit them. Those that I cannot 'manage' are few in number. 'Unpleasantness' has been rare in my experience, and when it has occurred it has seldom lasted. I am speaking, of course, of recent years; once it was very different.

What has made the change? Some will say that this is to be explained by my having grown more sure of myself, more experienced in dealing with people. Something of this sort has, in fact, happened. But there is more in it than that. I have been *changed*; and my conversion was in this manner: as soon as I recognized 'the sacramental quality of right personal relationships as a means of communion with God,' the moment I felt it is true that 'inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me,' it was then that the change began. It was then that I began to understand what it means to 'be converted and live,' and to share the experience described by Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ which liveth in me.' It was then that I began to know that to 'love your enemy,' to fight hard but to fight fairly, and even sympathetically, though it is difficult, is not impossible. There may be some who exude AGAPE as naturally as the air they breathe. I am not one of them. In so far as I am changed (the change is by no means complete), it is due to the grace of God, through my faith in Christ, through a deliberately reasoned belief in and (so far as I am able to make it so) a consciously continuous participation in the sacrament of right personal relationships as a means of (for me the most potent means of) communion with God. This is what I chiefly know as prayer, a prayer which never goes unanswered. '*Laborare*' (right personal relationships have to be worked for), '*est orare*.' It is a faith, and a sacramentalism, verified by experience. It sees Jesus in man, and man through the eyes of Jesus. And so it is the cure for pessimism, and it is fruitful in joy.

Have I then made it clear — this 'burden of my concern'? Regarding myself and my friends in the ministry, I see it thus: in the place of old shibboleths — to supplement but not to destroy — I seek a new orthodoxy of faith and will, faith in the indwelling God of Love, and the will to dwell in Him. For a touchstone I would take the only test of orthodoxy which Jesus ever made —

'by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' By this examination above every other the fitness of a candidate for ordination should be measured, and the right of an ordained minister to hold ecclesiastical office and preferment—indeed the continuing validity of his holy orders—should be weighed.

For such a re-enactment of godly discipline, for such a re-drafting of ecclesiastical law, the Church is waiting, a Church whose activity must be KAT' ARETEN, KATA PHUSIN and KATA DUNAMIN, because it is KAT' AGAPEN.

There should follow by logical sequence a further 'concern'—that 'the sacramental quality of right personal relationships' should be shown in our economic, political and other corporate ways of life. But to write of it now is not my 'concern.'

BOOK REVIEWS

WORDS OF A BELIEVER*

The author of these small books, *Good God* and *God in a World at War*, is out to bring God down from the realms of mystery into that of the understanding. He may even seem to have overdone the simplifying, but that is largely a matter of taste. He certainly avoids technicalities and circumlocutions.

'I propose,' he writes, 'to describe him (God) in perfectly ordinary language; and in ordinary human terms. I do the last not because I believe them to be adequate to a complete picture of God but because, being a man, they are the only terms I understand.'

The scientist, in seeking to understand the world, works backwards and sees it in terms of effects and their causes. The Creator's task was more difficult:

'God worked forwards, and every step forward was an unprecedented and unpredictable adventure.'

And he made it even more difficult, though at the same time more interesting, by transmitting to His creation

'enough of his own vitality for (creation) to be able to think for itself. In conventional language, he made a world with free will.'

In the beginning the scope of this free will was extremely limited:

'I do not know at what stage his creatures developed sufficiently not only to refuse to progress in the straight line of his purpose, but to exercise wills of their own in a direction opposite to his . . . Certainly it took place before the appearance of any life visible to the ordinary layman.'

Thus the relation of God to His world cannot be described by the analogy of winding up a piece of clockwork:

'The relation of God to each of his creatures is a surprising and unexpected one; he is within them; and, paradoxically enough, they are within him.'

* *Good God*, and *God in a World at War*. By John Hadham. (Penguin Books, 1940. 5d. each.)

Inasmuch as adequate knowledge of what He was like and what He was doing was essential in God's scheme of how the world should grow,

'He had planned to meet the obvious difficulties which would arise in man's understanding of him by a gradual and imperceptible revelation of himself—or rather confirmation of man's imagination and discoveries about him.'

But one final consequence of man's approach to a knowledge of God seemed to be the creation of a gulf between Him and them.

'The absolute perfection of God . . . slowly dawned upon the deepest thinkers; but at the same time the more they discovered, the more they realised how great was the gulf between themselves, even at their best, and this perfection. The more man found out God, the further away from themselves God seemed to be.'

This, in John Hadham's view, was the motive of the Incarnation.

'The only possible escape from this dilemma was an act of initiative on the side of God, a declaration by himself that this very perfection brought him closer to man than anything else, because it implied complete comprehension, and the complete acceptance of responsibility.'

'The decision he made was to enter the world himself, accepting the form and limitations of human life . . . His purpose was to show men a new meaning in what they had already discovered; he had no intention of saying anything new.'

Men had the facts but did not see them because they looked at them the wrong way, so the first charge of 'Jesus of Nazareth, this God-in-a-human-life,' was 'Change your way of looking at things.'

'The essential thing which God-in-a-human-life told them was that if only they would *change their outlook on life* they would realise that the world they were living in was God's kingdom . . .

'Since the world was God's kingdom, it followed that that which was done according to his will produced life; and what was done in opposition to it inevitably produced destruction. This was the nature of the world.'

In his sequel, *God in a World at War*, John Hadham in his first two chapters summarizes what he has said in his first book; and then he passes on to the practical consequences of the beliefs thus outlined. He rightly begins with a chapter, 'The Link between God and Man,' on prayer.

'Such is God,' he writes, 'such is man; and the conscious link between them is covered by that much-misunderstood word: *prayer* . . . Very few people know how to pray, or exactly what they expect from prayer . . .

'Any prayer is contact with God, and the form it takes is a natural consequence of the idea we hold of God . . .

'God made a world in which the basis of progress was co-operation between himself and his creatures . . . So far as action in this world is concerned God is not omnipotent. He might have been, had he wished to be, but he preferred the more interesting, if much more difficult, path of giving men free-will, giving them the power to understand and follow the way which would lead them to their perfection, and standing by himself, ready to help or guide *when he was asked*—though the asking need not necessarily be conscious, but may be only the utterly sincere desire to do the right thing.

'When he acts, God acts through man and through the natural laws of the world which he has created. Since man's co-operation is an essential part of the action, he is helped or handicapped by men's fitness or unfitness for the task at hand. And this is not merely *moral* fitness; it is intellectual, bodily and every other fitness as well.'

Then John Hadham makes the point that prayer is the generator of fitness, the power-house; and to stress its importance, he italicizes the passage:

'For contact with God is the creation of power—of a real power which CAN alter situations, create new conditions, give new strength, bring new wisdom, snatch victory from defeat. This is no "miracle" in the sense of contradicting natural law, for the creative power of God released in his world is itself the force by which natural law works.'

Such remarks are useful, for, as he points out, to the vast majority of the present generation prayer has become a formality, a mystery, or an absurdity.

There is plenty of good stuff in these two books, and it will do nobody any harm to read them. In particular, the author does not associate himself in any degree with the now fashionable pessimism which has replaced the optimism of an earlier epoch, and which ecclesiastical apologists, both Protestant and Catholic, are exploiting for their own ends. There is nothing of that sort here, and indeed the ecclesiastics get some hard punches. John Hadham gets his message across, and that is the main thing; it is a good, vigorous, heartening message, and it should appeal to the rising generation which finds our churches and chapels like junk shops or museums rather than power-houses generating current for the work of the Lord.

J.C.H.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman*

CHRISTIAN AUTHORITY.

SIR,

In your study of Scriptural and Ecclesiastical Authority in your March issue you pit one against the other for the supremacy. Surely this is a false antithesis. The Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is the quarry of raw material for the faith. But it has to be dug out and manufactured for use by the community—the Church or Christian body to which we belong. The interpretation and right use of the truth must in general be directed by the body corporate with liberty to every individual to explore, interpret and apply it on his own account. Hence on the one hand the rigid formularies and practises of the Church, on the other the frequent breakaway of sects and movements, individual salvationism and piety, reformations, nationalism and even agnosticism itself. This is all very natural and healthy. When the priestly authority with its threat of excommunication came to an end with the break from Rome, human nature, needing an infallible authority as its prop and stay, turned to the Bible and attributed to it a literal infallibility—in the A.V. From this we are still suffering, while we seek to find and spread the enhanced value of the Biblical story and literature. The English-speaking world is necessarily obsessed by habits of thought, phrase and symbol associated with reverence for the literal word. But its prime authority is gone.

In unveiling the truth, we must recognize that we are knocking away the prop which has supported the Protestant desire for outward and visible authority. The only alternative—and for the masses, both in the mission-field and at home, an alternative is essential—is the authority of the Christian body, the Church Catholic, which binds us in one army for the eternal war. In that body modern Churchmen are a mere fraction. But truth often comes from a minority. In secular matters public and parliamentary criticism is influencing the Government of the day. It is our mission to influence the Church from within, to strengthen and not weaken it, so that it may ever be,

with the help of free but loyal criticism, the sure guide for the whole Christian family, with the Bible as its basis for careful and intelligent use.

Democratic authority rests on no static basis but on evolution of ideas, freedom for their development and survival of the fittest.

Bedwell Park,
Hatfield, Herts.

FRANCIS FREMANTLE.

March 28, 1942.

METHODS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

SIR,

The three main articles in the *Modern Churchman* for February 1942 make a powerful trio, and should be read and studied together.

In the first one — by our President — two references are made to myself, and perhaps you will allow me a word or two in explanation. The differences between Sir Cyril Norwood and me are much slighter than he supposes. On the first, a most important, point, I do not think there is any difference whatever. I am in complete agreement with the President as to the necessity for a Theistic basis for morality. I laboured the point at some length in my inaugural lecture of which you, Sir, gave a full report in the *Modern Churchman* of November 1940. It is my firm conviction that in God, and in God alone, can any sanction be found for morality. To seek a basis elsewhere is to commit the unpardonable sin of idolatry, which was always ruthlessly attacked by the prophets and is now the chief cause of the present world conflict.

With regard to the second point — the value of short courses in Divinity — perhaps I do think more highly of their usefulness than does Sir Cyril. The last war taught us to place considerable reliance on the short course, and I was not the only one to be astonished at the extent of their success. It is true that a first class theologian cannot be turned out in a week, but it is also true that an intelligent man or woman can learn enough from a week's intensive course to be able to *go on* learning indefinitely. An astonishing amount of rubbish can be cleared away in a week, and any expert who has had experience of teaching can do considerably more than merely clear away rubbish. Short circuits can be made, the results of other people's work given without — and this is very important — leaving a one-sided impression on his pupils.

Come and see.

R. B. HENDERSON.

New College,
Oxford.

PRAYERS FOR GUIDANCE.

SIR,

The two following prayers have been suggested for use at the opening of M.C.U. meetings:—

Heavenly Father, grant unto us such wisdom and understanding, that all that we decide, and do, shall be in accordance with Thy Will. Many serious problems are awaiting solution by the Church, and we ask Thee to give us courage fearlessly to face them in the interest of Truth as exemplified in the teaching and example of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

or

Holy Father be with us in our work this day, and help us to come to a right decision in all things, so that whatever we undertake may be in accordance with Thy Will through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

W.W.